

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM



***FULL COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT HEARING:
Restoring the Public Trust:
A Review of the Federal Pension Forfeiture Act***

***OPENING STATEMENT OF
REP. TODD RUSSELL PLATTS (R-PA-19)
FEBRUARY 1, 2006***

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing today on such an important and timely topic. I support the premise behind the Federal Pension Forfeiture Act, and I believe we must act quickly to reaffirm the public's trust in Congress and the Federal government.

In December, Rep. Mark Kirk, myself, and a number of other Members introduced H.R. 4535, the *Congressional Integrity Act of 2005*, which would deny Federal pensions to Members of Congress convicted of a felony. That measure has broad support from both moderate and conservative leaders in the Republican conference, and I would urge you to work with Rep. Kirk, myself, and other Members focused on this issue to ensure that whichever bill Congress moves forward is as comprehensive as it should be.

Along the same lines, I also voice my support for the broader effort to reform the way Washington works. I was pleased when Speaker Hastert announced his intention to enact lobbying reform, and on January 9, 2006, I submitted a proposal with key elements I felt should be included. These principles – *transparency*, *accountability*, and *personal responsibility* – are based on my work as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Management, Finance, and Accountability, where I have had the opportunity to examine various mechanisms and controls that enhance accountability. To the extent that this Committee will have input in any lobbying reform, I respectfully offer my expertise toward that effort.

Again, Chairman Davis, I appreciate your interest in this topic, and I look forward to this hearing.